

Leon A. Ferber – written testimony against SB374

What is the purpose of this proposed law SB374? The State already conducts assessment of children for the purpose of special education. Thus, it would appear that there is no need to further duplicate and expand the current assessment program.

If we are trying to determine if a child is ‘sick’ and needs medical treatment for a mental disorder, and if we want to implement a cost effective program to do that, we have an existing model in place. The state already mandates genetic testing for newborns, and there are also NIH guidelines for testing for chronic diseases, such as diabetes, obesity, cholesterol, etc., all performed by the child’s pediatrician. Therefore, it follows that the pediatrician, who has knowledge of the child’s medical record for many years – would be the obvious choice, to determine, in consultation with the parent, if a behavioral health assessment by a qualified MD is necessary. Additionally, this would make it easier to mandate coverage by health insurance, since only a fraction of all children would require assessment.

It will also pass constitutional muster, as parental rights will be preserved, and all children will be treated equally, regardless of where they are being schooled.

Respectfully submitted,
Leon Ferber